India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) are still going on.

(b) The 4th Round of discussions were held in Singapore from 22-24 September 2003.

(c) and (d) While no time frame has been fixed to finalize the details, it is proposed to conclude the negotiations early.

Free Trade Agreement with Thailand

†1956. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have signed any Free Trade Agreement with Thailand, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that Bangkok, the capital of Thailand is a centre of activities of several terrorist outfits operating in India and keeping in view this fact would it not adversely affect the trade relations between both the countries; and

(c) by when a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement would come into effect between India and Thailand and the areas which would be commercially benefited by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) India and Thailand have signed only a Framework Agreement for establishing a Free Trade Area (FTA) on 9th October, 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand. The key elements of the Framework Agreement cover FTA in Goods, Services and Investment, and Areas of Economic Cooperation. The Framework Agreement also provides for an Early Harvest Scheme (EHS) under which common items have been agreed for elimination of tariffs on a fast track basis.

(b) The issues relating to terrorism are not part of FTA Negotiations.

(c) The Framework Agreement provides for timeframes for negotiations on FTA in goods, services and investments. The Framework Agreement prescribes for establishing India-Thailand Free Trade Area in

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

goods by the year 2010. With the FTA in place it is expected that the bilateral trade in goods by the year 2010. With the FTA in place it is expected that the bilateral trade in goods, services and investment flows would benefit.

Rise in Exports

†1957. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been 29 per cent increase in exports during May, 2004;

(b) if so, the factors behind the increase; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to maintain this growth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Yes Sir. Exports in May, 2004 have shown a high growth of 29.43% in dollar terms as compared to May, 2003.

(b) Exports have registered a healthy growth in May 2004 on account of improved global trading environment, promotional and facilitative measures taken by the Government and growing export competitiveness of our exports.

(c) A Medium Term Export Strategy which is co-terminus with the Tenth Plan period (2002-07) was announced in January, 2002 with the objective of enhancing India's exports and achieving 1% share in world exports. A number of programmes/schemes have been launched which include schemes like Assistance to States for Developing Export Infrastructure (ASIDE), establishing Agri Export Zones, Market Access Initiative, strengthening 'Focus LAC programme, introducing 'Focus Africa' programmes, etc. In the Exim Policy, 2003-04 and Exim Facilitation Measures announced in January, 2004, besides, the focus on service exports and policies to strengthen Special Economic Zones (SEZs), a new programme called 'Focus CIS' has been introduced. Thus, measures are being taken from time to time to increase India's exports.

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